

A

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, February 8. 1709.

I Am now come to the grand Enquiry in the Affair of the Invasion; *Viz.* How comes it to pass, that since all People allow, that the French had private Encouragements and Invitations from *Scotland* to make that desperate Attempt, *for such I must call it, after they knew, the English with superior Force were just at their Heels?* How comes it to pass, that no Footsteps of their Intelligence can be trac'd, no Evidence be obtain'd, not one Criminal detected or brought to Justice.

This nice Question would be in Part answer'd by asking some other Questions; some of which I readily acknowledge my being unable to answer, and shall be content to hear any Body else answer them for me.

1. Were there any Persons; who might reasonably be suspected who were not taken up; I know, there have been Complaints of Partiality, in taking up some, of private Designes to ruin Interests for Elections, of Blank Warrants, and the like, tho' upon the strictest Enquiry, I cannot find any Proof made of such Things; some that cry'd out loudest of being taken up to supplant their Interest in Elections, when they were let go Time enough to be at those Elections, it appear'd had little or no Interest there; and others being let go, found their Interest not impair'd by it, but were actually chosen; nor has any Proof, other than a general Clamour, been made of any such

such Thing, as Blank Warrants given to the Persons in Trust, by which they might have Opportunity to gratifie Private, Personal, or Party Piques, in their filling up and executing those Warrants. But had all this been true, it does not reach this Question at all, and really the mistaking our Question is one great Reason, why we run away with imperfect and indirect Answers in many Cases? The Question is not so much, whether any People were taken up whom there was no Cause to suspect, it might be granted without Injury to the present Case. But were there any People NOT TAKEN UP, whom there were good Reasons to suspect — If this Question could be answer'd directly, it would pinch hard, and I wonder, my Lord H——m should omit so material Enquiry as this. Here would indeed be Cause to suspect the Persons employ'd, and to charge even the very Ministry there, with giving Encouragements to the French.

And yet after all, this very Question may be answer'd in the Affirmative too — — — And one great Man might be pointed out, upon whom without injuring his Character, it might be said, there were the same Reasons for securing him, as there were for securing others — — But I do not say, it was equally easie to come at him, or at least to take him; it is true, he shew'd himself sometime in publick, after it was discours'd of, that Persons suspe&cted should be taken up — But I believe, it cannot be made out, that he was ever come-at-able after Warrants for that Work were sent down.

I need not take any Pains to tell the Reader, that there are some People in Scotland, who, unless they please, will not be taken, and to whom you have not *Tutus Accessus*, as they call it in another Case, and perhaps some such may be named in this Case — It may be objected, that the Government ought to summon such to surrender and come in, or else proceed against them, as in open Rebellion. To this my Answer is double.

1. That had been one way to put them into open Rebellion at that time, which however some may boast, was not the Governments Interest to do; the few Forces we had there, and the Posture of Things abroad consider'd — Besides sundry other good Reasons, needless to be repeated.
2. The first Part of this was actually done to one great D. who being very sick, whether really or not, I shall not suggest, gave his Illness for a Reason in very civil Terms, why he could not put himself into the Hands of the Government; which Reasons the Government, had they been stronger than they were, perhaps would not so easily have been satisfy'd with. But after all other than the common Suspicions, I never could find, that the Government could arrive to any positive Proof even against him or any other Person whom they did not apprehend.

It remains to enquire, what Evidence they were arriv'd to against those that were apprehended, and how far the Proceeding was regular, and how far not, because the Rehearsal says, the Gentlemen came off honourably.

M I S C E L L A N E A.

I am now examining, what has and has not been done since 1684, towards the curing the great Evil of Trade, to which this Nation is peculiarly subjected, I mean

the Cruelty of Creditors, and the Knavery of Debtors. I nam'd you one Act, I shall have Occasion to return to it again — — — The next I meet with, of any Signification, pass'd

pass'd in the Yeat 1695, Enacting, That any Agreement between the Debtor and Creditor should be binding to all, where two Thirds of the said Creditors in Numbers and Value subscriv'd to such Agreement.

This, as leaving it pretty much in the Power of the Creditors, whether to give their Debtors Liberty or no, without enquiring into the Merits of the Cause, was not much oppos'd, and *it will be worth observing* in the Process of this Story; that all along thorough all the Attempts which have been since made to obtain some stated Period to be put to the Creditors Fury, the End of all their Opposition has been singly this, to leave the Debtor entirely at Mercy; as far as any A&E has or has not done this, so far they have or have not oppos'd it; and this is the only Thing will ever make them easie—To have the Debtor be for ever left at the Discretion of the Creditor, a mere Subject of his Mercy, and *what that Mercy has amounted to*, let the many Funerals from our common Gaols, after miserable starving them with Cold and Hunger, the Crowds of languishing Debtors now cag'd up like Beasts, Men of good Families and Fortunes in the World, that have been bred tenderly, have liv'd handsomely: I say, let these testify, who experience the Mercy of Creditors every Day in the extreamest Severities, lying on the naked Floors without Fuel or Covering, and perhaps without Food in the late violent Cold, poison'd with Stench, and stabb'd to the Heart with the wretched Company and Place, promiscuously mingled with Murtherers, Thieves and Traytors, whose better Case gets a frequent Deliverance by the Gallows—But these have no End to their Miseries, no View of Deliverance, but in that Mercy of the Creditor which is not to be had, and who insolently triumphs in their Distresses.

No wonder, Men spend the little Remainders of what they have in the World, and with which Creditors should be satisfy'd, in all the Arts and Shifts to keep themselves out of this wretched Condition. No wonder they fly to Mints and Rules, and seek Sanctuary under the Keys of Gaolers, with precarious half-in-half Liberty they purchase with their Creditors Money, as long

as it lasts—Tho' these Places are lurking Holes for Thieves, and are Scandals to the Nation, yet while the Cruelty of the Creditor is thus unlimited, no Man can blame the distressed Debtor for taking Shelter among Rogues; the hunted Hare finding no Safety behind her; when the bloody Hounds are at her Heels, will run into the Arms of another that did not pursue her, tho' she meets her Death there also. Men on Board a Ship on Fire will leap into the Water, and it is most natural to Man to shun the nearest Evil, and choose that which is most remote.

From whence I cannot but note, and shall speak to it more largely hereafter; The only Way to root out of the Nation, that hitherto incurable Grievance of the MINT and RULES, and such priviledg'd Places, which I have nothing at all to say for, *is this*; Make but some Sanctuary, some Refuge, some Door of Deliverance for the honest indigent Debtor to fly to, when he is strip'd naked by the Creditors, and at which he may escape from the Torture of a Prison, that languishing, slow Fire that consumes the Vitals, breaks the stoutest Courage, and is ten-fold worse than the Gallows: Let there be but some certain Deliverance for his Life, when he has honestly parted with all his Goods, you must effectually destroy all those wicked Places, they will grow every Day more and more odious, an honest Man will have no need of them, for he will find his Safety in the Arms of his Creditors—No Man that has any Remains of a Principle will fly from his Creditors, if he can fly to them. The Mint and Rules must be Shelters and Sanctuaries of none but Villains, who ought to be taken from the Horns of the Altar; nay, they will be no Refuge at all, an honest Man will blush to be seen there, and a Knave all Men will joy to fetch out from thence —— 'Tis Want of Safety, being annex'd to Honesty, makes honest Men turn Rogues.

To say an honest Man will not turn Knave, *is a vulgar Error*; if you take Knavery in the present common Acceptation of it, every Man will turn Knave so, the honestest Man in the World will eat his Neighbours Loaf if it be in his Cupboard, rather

rather than perish ; and even the Scripture bids us not despise such a Thief, who steals to satisfy his Hunger ; not that the Man is less a Thief, but despise him not, you that know not what Hunger is ; for if you were driven to the same Extremity, the honestest Man among you would steal also. There are some Distresses in the World, which Human Nature is not qualify'd to bear : and this is one. The honestest Man in the World, if driven to Extremity, will not eat his Neighbours Loaf only, but he will eat his Neighbour himself, if he is put to it, ay and say Grace to the Feast, as has been known. *G O D deliver every honest Man from the Extremities, that put so severe a Trial upon his Honesty, and in the mean time the Sence of this Human Frailty ought to lead every Man to the Rule, Despise not the Thief, &c. He that thinketh best and doth, take heed lest he fall, &c.*

In like manner, Gentlemen, shall I turn the Text to the Purpose. I dare say, you will allow it will bear it ; Despise not the Man, who flies to the Mint or the Rules to preserve himself from a Gaol— Despise not the Man, who uses any Shift to keep himself out of a Dead Warrants Hand, out of a perpetual Prison. Thirst of Liberty and Hunger for Food are exactly synonymous in this Case ; if a Man have the firmest Resolution to pay to his Creditor the utmost Farthing, or the utmost he is able, but is push'd at by their Cruelty, refusing to accept his utmost Offers, but are hunting him out with Arrests, Executions, murthering Warrants, and the like. Can any Body blame this Man for keeping in Places of Security to shelter himself? Can any Body blame this Man for preserving himself from Death, and his Family from perishing, tho' it be at the Cost of his Creditors ?

It is you Creditors, inexorable, inhuman and unperswadable Creditors, that are the Supporters of the Mint and Rules ; Come but to a Certainty with Men, that when they fall into your Hands, they shall not be murther'd, and every honest Man will put himself into your Hands ; but when you set up for meer Barbarity, you drive Men

from you, then you hunt them with Blood-Hounds, and terrifie them with Escape-Warrants, which are worse to a Man of Spirit than present Death, and away they fly into the worst Place in the World for Shelter, like the Hare that is hunted, runs into the Hand of her Enemy.

If therefore you would pull down the Mint, Rules, &c. this is the way ; Give the honest Man a Shelter in the Protection of the Law, he will always fly to you ; nothing but Villains, Thieves, and publick Cheats will fly to the Mint, &c. and all the well-meaning Part of the Nation will joyn in destroying those Places, as Sanctuaries of a Kind of People, that no Government ought to protect.

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